

September 26, 2008

A Message From Governor Haley Barbour

As Governor of the State of Mississippi, it is with great pride that I welcome you to the University of Mississippi, host of the first official Presidential debate between Senator John S. McCain and Senator Barack Obama. As both a lifelong Mississippian and Ole Miss graduate I am particularly excited as Mississippi serves as the backdrop for an open discussion on foreign policy issues so critical to the security and, ultimately, the survival of our great nation.

When the Commission on Presidential Debates announced Ole Miss was selected for this important event one thing was clear: This decision provided Mississippi with a platform not only to participate in one of the fundamental democratic processes of America's electoral system, but also with a historic opportunity to showcase to a worldwide audience our state's rich heritage, unique culture, economic progress, and exemplary academic institutions.

We confidently accepted the challenge. I believe you will see that the months of preparation, unprecedented collaboration among city, university, state and debate commission officials and many private sector partners will result in a meaningful debate experience for the participants, guests, students, media, listeners and viewers.

Tonight, again, Mississippi and its citizens are at the epicenter of history. We are proud to host the first 2008 debate between the major party nominees for President, and we warmly welcome you to our state.

Sincerely,

Haley Barbour
Governor